



Weekly Activity Update

July 10 - July 16 • 2005 • Issue 94

Power Sector Activities

USAID is currently refurbishing the Kajaki Hydroelectric power plant in Helmand province. A technical/kickoff meeting with various stakeholders to discuss the new turbine Unit 2, planning for Unit 1 and 3 upgrades, and other technical and commercial issues was held in Beijing from June 24 – 30. At the meeting it was decided that the Unit 1 and 3 upgrade work will take place after the commissioning of Unit 2, due to manufacturing and delivery schedules. This will also allow rehabilitation work to be completed prior to the mobilization of the Unit 2 installation contractor.

For Units 1 and 3, recent progress includes the arrival of the hydro turbine parts at the Kajaki site and the commencement of work on the turbine reassembly.



Installation of the upper bracket for the Kajaki Hydroelectric Power Plant.

Parliamentary Elections Update

As of early July, 1,032 male and female voter registration centers have been opened in 720 locations in all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Approximately 288,863 people have registered to vote, with 245,450 receiving new cards. Of total registered voters, 30% are women and approximately 8% are Kuchi nomads. There are high women registrations in the provinces of Ghazni, Paktika, Paktia, Nuristan, Nimroz, and Dai Kundi. A toll-free Voter Information Hotline has been established.

The candidate campaign period is from August 17 to September 15; political advertising on TV, radio and in newspapers is banned until the start of the official campaign period.

Candidate Vetting

As of July 5, the Electoral Complaints Commission has received over 1,138 challenges against 556 candidates. A total of 233 candidates were provisionally disqualified. Of those, 208 were linked to Illegally Armed Groups (IAG). Provinces with the highest number of IAG-disqualified candidates include Nangarhar (25), Herat (15), Laghman (13), and Nuristan (13). The deadline for provisionally disqualified candidates to comply with the electoral law was July 7 and the final candidates list was scheduled to be certified July 12, 2005.

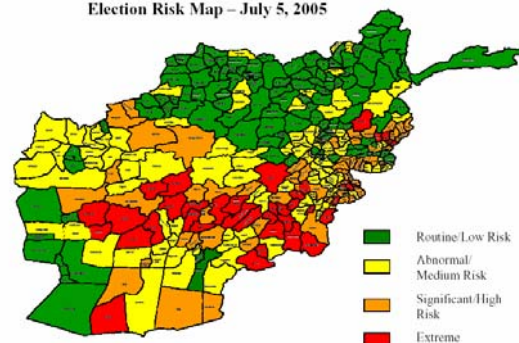
Election Observation

The European Union (EU) will send a full observation mission, totaling approximately 100 people, to the parliamentary elections. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly all also send a small monitoring group. FEFA, a coalition of Afghan groups, have recruited approximately 5,000 monitors. Public Notices have also been distributed throughout the country explaining the observer accreditation process and encouraging observer/monitoring participation.

Key Election Dates

April 30 – May 19: Candidate Nominations
June 25 – July 21: Voter registration
May 20 – July 12: Candidate Vetting & Review
July 12: Final Certified Candidate List
Aug 17 – Sept 16: Campaign Period
September 18: Election Date

Election Risk Map – July 5, 2005



Reforestation, Biodiversity Conservation and Employment Generation

USAID's forestry project aims to rehabilitate pistachio woodlands in the pistachio belt extending from northern to north-western Afghanistan and conifer forests in eastern Afghanistan; provide cash-for-work opportunities to vulnerable people through labor-based reforestation projects; develop the technical and managerial capacity of the Government and local forestry experts; and promote conservation and stewardship of forests in rural villages surrounding forest rehabilitation projects. USAID works too achieve these ends in collaboration with the Afghanistan Conservation Corps (ACC).

Project progress to date includes complete seeding for thirty-two reforestation subprojects in twelve provinces for a total of 186 hectares of pistachio woodlands and 93.8 hectares of conifer forest. Remaining activities include irrigation, weeding, site protection and monitoring

Assessment of germination rates produced an overall average survival rate of 67% among all sites, with 57% for 17 pistachio sites and 61% for 15 conifer sites. The project has generated 121,765 labor days of work to date.

Following the recommendations of a U.S. Department of Agriculture pistachio reforestation assessment team, ACC and the Afghan Department of Forestry will co-manage the reforestation sites after the project ends. This will include how the reforestation sites are integrated into the Department's developing natural resource management program and their continued maintenance. In addition, the upcoming final report for the project will include the Department's recommendations and objectives for pistachio and conifer reforestation plus an explanation of how the results and lessons learned from this project will influence further reforestation efforts.

Security Incidents

Number of Hostile Attacks: For the reporting period of 7/12 – 7/19, there were 6 hostile attacks resulting in one death and two persons injured (intimidation and threats against election workers continues).

On July 19, In Injil District, near the Herat Airport, a suicide bomber targeted the Police chief of Injil District close to his residence in Injil. The one person who died at the scene was the suicide bomber. The Police Chief received minor injuries.

